

BLUES ROBBED!

Disputed penalty saves champions

By MICHAEL KNOX Wycombe 1, Enfield 1



crashes a shot against the Enfield goal in the first half of Saturday's epic encounter at Loakes Park.

WYCOMBE, on whom fortune has rarely smiled this season, suffered the cruellest blow of all on Saturday, when a controversial injury time penalty robbed them of victory over reigning Berger Isthmian League champions Enfield at an emotional Loakes Park.

Wanderers were leading by a Jimmy Jacobs goal, scored midway through the second half, as the seconds ticked away when Enfield in sheer desperation, played a long ball into the home penalty area.

Striker Peter Burton and Blues defender Bobby Davies were chasing after the ball when Burton stumbled to the ground. Referee Clive Andrews, who was some 30 yards away from the incident, immediately pointed to the penalty spot.

The Wycombe players could not believe it. The Wycombe crowd could not believe it and secretly the Enfield team could not believe it. But there it was — a last gasp chance for Enfield to save a game they had given up for lost.

Guessed

Then Enfield suddenly realised that their penalty taker

Ron Howell had already been substituted, so while the Wycombe players crowded round the referee and the home supporters jeered, Steve King was chosen to take the vital kick.

King sent the ball to Gary Lester's right. The goalkeeper guessed correctly and although touching the ball, could not stop it entering the net.

So Wycombe had been robbed and the crowd of 1,400 — their largest of the season and bigger than one Fourth Division match on Saturday — were in an angry mood.

Overawed

Not only did they think that there had been no foul, but some of them spotted Burton controlling the ball with his hand before the incident occurred. The Enfield camp admitted privately after the match that this was the case but that of course is little consolation.

Rarely have I seen a Wycombe crowd in such a bitter mood after the match and I commend the quick thinking of the home officials who escorted Mr Andrews off the field in case of trouble, which thankfully did not arise.

This late drama obscured the fact that over the 90 minutes Enfield probably deserved a draw, but in the end

they were desperately lucky to get one.

Wycombe, who seemed overawed by the reputation of their opponents, began tentatively and Enfield controlled much of the first half and had two great chances to take a half-time lead.

Bishop headed against the bar from close in, and then Noel Ashford had an almost clear shot as the defence opened up in front of him. But Lester just got a boot to the shot and deflected it inches wide. Wycombe's best effort came from Jacobs, who struck the bar after good work by Steve Long on the right.

With Enfield failing to take their chances while on top — Howell blasted over an open goal just after half-time — one could sense the confidence returning to the Wycombe players.

Then in the 66th minute they went ahead. Terry Glynn, returning to the side against his old teammates, slipped past Tony Jennings on the left and sent a low cross into the goalmouth.

Electric

Steve Long's shot was blocked but the ball went to Jacobs, who after what appeared to be an age, drove a shot into the back of the net.

The atmosphere from then until the end was electric, with the whole of Wycombe sensing Enfield's second de-

feat of the season. There is always something about Enfield that makes them the team to beat.

The visitors could make little impression on the Wycombe defence, which had overcome its early uncertainty and had Gary Toll not missed a golden opportunity five minutes from time then they would have been well and truly buried.

A great through pass by Jacobs put Toll in the clear. But the ex-Flackwell Heath forward side-footed the ball wide of an open goal.

One disturbing factor from Wycombe's point of view was the fact that they collected three more bookings to take their number this season into double figures.

For the second time in a week Steve Hardwick was cautioned for handball — by the same referee — while Terry Glynn (time-wasting) and Jacobs (dissent) were also shown the yellow card.

Mr Andrews also booked Enfield's Noel Ashford and Keith Barrett. So all in all, the referee and everybody else had quite a game to remember.

WYCOMBE: G. Lester; K. Mead, P. Birdseye, R. Davies, S. Hardwick; R. Dell, S. Long, G. Toll, T. Glynn, J. Jacobs, G. Borg. Sub.: P. Miles (not used).

ENFIELD: A. Welsh; K. Barrett, J. Toney, A. Jennings, D. Waite, R. Howell (sub.: L. Holmes 83 mins), N. Ashford, J. Bishop, P. Burton, S. Oliver, S. King.

Referee: C. F. Andrews (Farnborough). **Half-time:** 0-0. **Scorers:** Wycombe — Jacobs (66 min.); Enfield — King (pen. 90).

Attendance: 1,400.